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MY MOTHER

AND

Our Old English Home

BY

REV. SAMUEL MASSEY.

*"I miss thee, my mother! thy image is still
So deeply impressed on my heart;
And the tablet thus faithful, in death must we chill,
'Ere a line of that image depart."*

**The Stately Homes of England,
How beautiful they stand.**

—MRS. HEMANS.

SECOND EDITION.

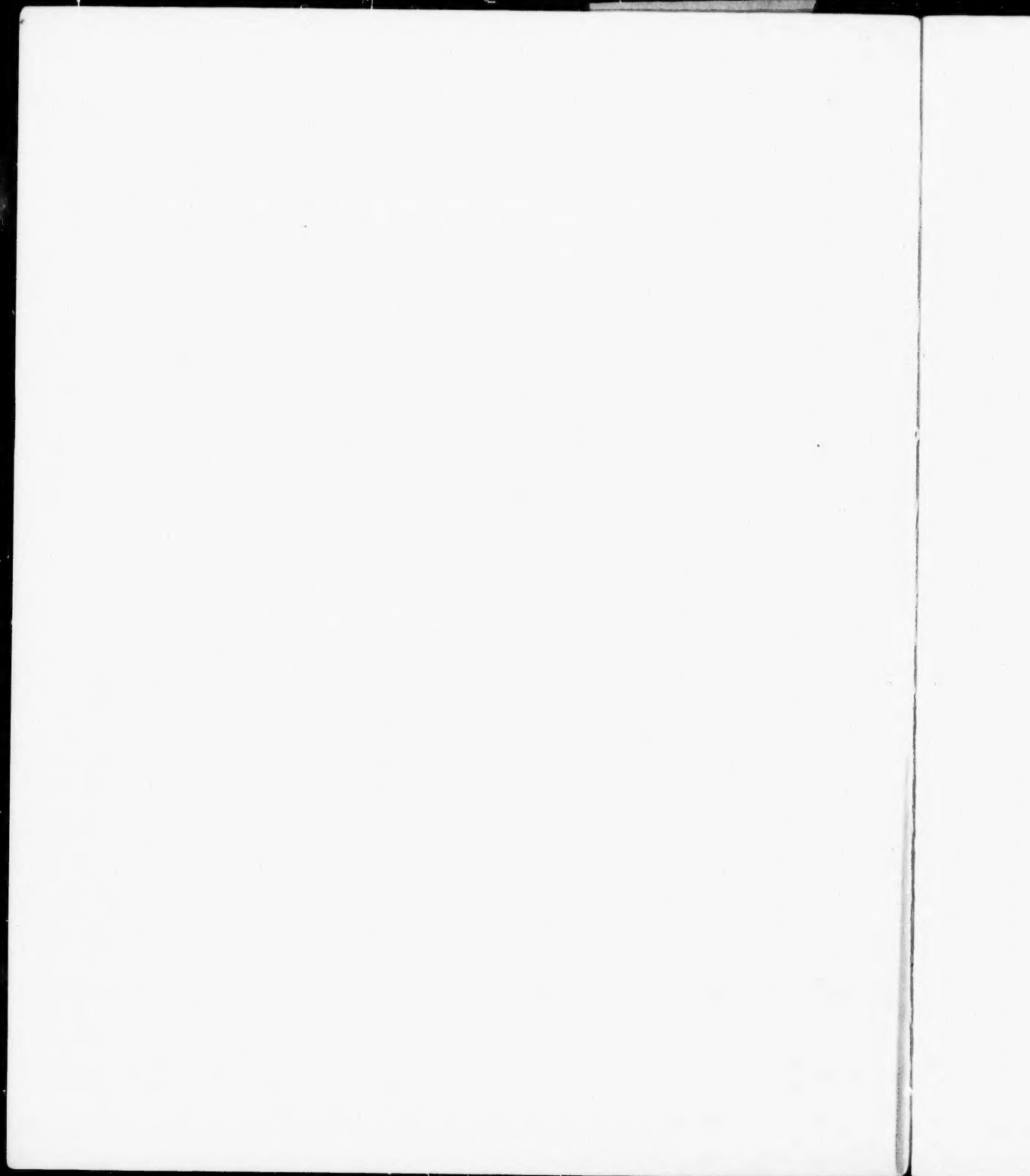
NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1887.

MONTREAL, CAN.

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*This little book is sent forth on a mission
to Mothers. Will they kindly read it and
ponder and pray over it? Should they do so,
it will well fulfil its loving mission.*

S. M.



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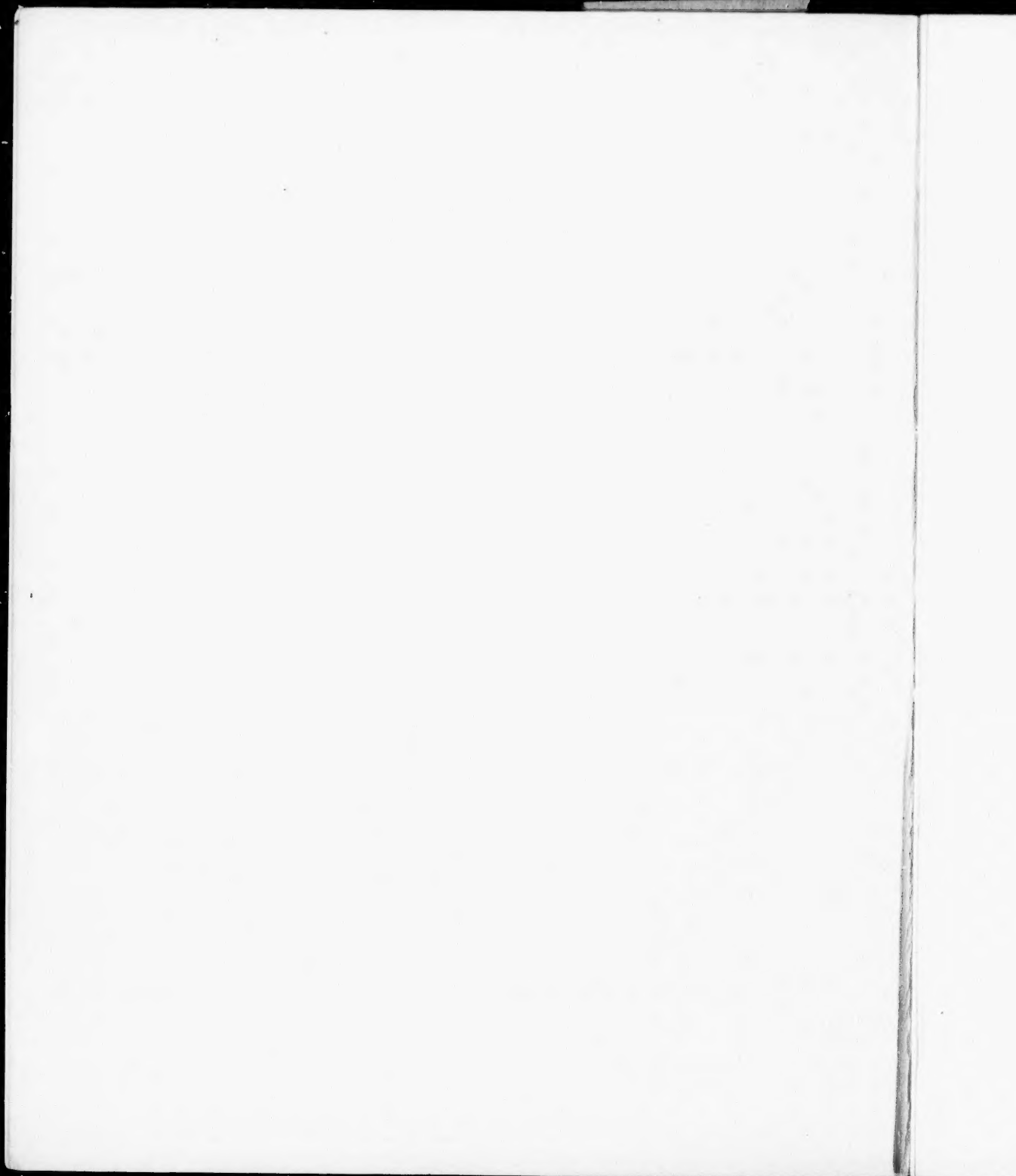
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Samuel Massey.

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MY MOTHER.

"Fervent in Spirit ; serving the Lord : rejoicing in hope : patient in tribulation ; continuing instant in prayer ; given to hospitality."—ROM. xii, 11-13.

My love for my now sainted and excellent mother, Mrs. Ann Massey, is as fresh and green as it was when I was a little boy at home. She was the daughter of Robert and Ellen Moreton and was born at Wincham, Northwich, in the County of Chester, England, in the year 1780. Her parents, although not decidedly pious when she was young, were steady, industrious people, and highly esteemed in their own neighbourhood. Her father, as a man of business, was remarkable for his uprightness, punctuality, and prompt energetic action ; he could never perform what he considered to be his duty with a slack hand. Whether he was actuated by a religious motive or not, whatever his hand found to do, he did it with his might. As would be expected by those acquainted with him, he was stern and somewhat over strict with his children. Her mother's nature was full of kindness, and consequently her deportment towards her children was rather the opposite to her husband's. Not that he was lacking in affection. His strictness was the result of a strong regard for their future welfare, as he considered strict discipline necessary in the training of youth. Although it could not be said that the subject of this sketch enjoyed the inestimable blessing of a religious education, yet she was early taught to respect religion and religious people, as well as to cultivate good habits, such as early rising, punctuality, honesty, truthful-

ness and prompt obedience to her parents. In early life she was the subject of serious impressions, *thoughts of God, eternity*, and the salvation of her soul seemed to chase away all that foolishness, which, the wise man says, is bound up in the heart of a child. Many years was she struggling for light, and anxiously inquiring after that truth which saves the soul ; but alas ! there was none to guide her, or to show unto her the way of life. She struggled on, hoping to obtain salvation by the "works of the law," until she arrived at woman's estate, when she was providentially led to hear a discourse by the Rev. Z. Yewdall, by which she discovered the more excellent way of faith in Jesus Christ. From that time for upwards of forty years she continued to walk in the fear of God, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost, adorning the doctrines of the Gospel by a holy life and holy conversation. She was united in marriage to Mr. S. Massey, who was converted to God about the same time as herself. This union was singularly happy, for "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives and in death they were not divided." After travelling life's weary way together for nearly half a century, they both bade us an almost simultaneous and final farewell.

My mother regarded religion as an every-day business—something not only to be enjoyed, but to be *practised*, not only on the Sabbath, and at church, but during the six days of the week. It was seen in her daily walk and conversation. Her piety was not showy, but solid and steady, not resembling the dazzling and momentary splendour of the comet, but rather the rising sun shining more and more unto the perfect day. She took her religion from the Bible, which she ever regarded as the only sufficient rule of faith and practice. She tested everything by this unerring standard, hence her unwavering perseverance in the good old paths. In seasons of spiritual declension, when the love of many waxed cold, she would be a mourner in Zion, and would weep and pray for its prosperity. And while the

writer would not forget that she was human, and no doubt had many defects and infirmities, yet it would be difficult for those who knew her best to point them out. Whatever they might be ; they seemed to be eclipsed by her many excellencies. She lived in the suburbs of heaven, and no one could remain long in her presence without observing this. She seemed to have no relish for worldly pleasure or worldly conversation ; her treasure and heart were in heaven, hence the following stanza was a favorite of hers :—

“Farewell, vain world, adieu, adieu,
Thou hast no charms for me ;
I once admired thy trifles too,
But grace hath set me free.”

To her the Sabbath was the “pearl of days,” the light of the week, the brightest and best of all the seven. She regarded it as a Divine institution of unspeakable importance both to the Church and the world. Preparations for its observance commenced in her family on the evening of Saturday, and early on the Sabbath morning a religious meeting was held in her house. For many years this meeting was rendered a great blessing to her family and neighbours. She used to observe that if we commenced the day well, it generally continued and ended well, and that “a Sabbath well spent brings a week of content.” In her well-ordered home, it was a day of quietness and peace. How sweet and pleasant to the writer is the retrospect of those holy days, which, like their predecessors, have now long since passed away. God has anointed this day with the oil of gladness above all its fellows. What the sun is among the planets—what the market-day is to the tradesman, what a fair wind is to the sailor, what the tide is to the waterman—*that* the Sabbath-day is to the soul. Augustine calls it the ‘Queen of days.’ It is the great market-day of heaven, when starving souls may take in, and lay up provision for the rest of the

week ; yea, for eternity itself. Blot out this day from the calendar of the Christian, and all that remains would be cloudy and cheerless."

O ! day most calm, most bright,
The week were dark without thy light."

As far as her influence extended she was a "peacemaker"—"a restorer of the breach." She exerted herself in promoting peace in the family, the village and the Church, though she was sometimes pained to see and hear people striving for peace in the Church at the expense of purity. Purity of communion, she contended, was the *first* and most important object to be obtained in the Church, hence she often prayed for that "wisdom which cometh from above, which is *first pure*, then peaceable, easy to be entreated and full of good fruits ;" and nothing has tended more to bring the Church of God into disrepute than the lack of attention which has obtained on this important matter. The *order* of scripture is *first purity*, then peace.

Worldly-minded, or luke-warm professors, never could enjoy her company, nor indeed would they remain long in her presence. A backslider, after he had been restored, was once heard to say, that he would have gone a mile another way, rather than have met her, or have fallen into her company, when in his backsliding state. Religion, Christ and Heaven were her almost constant topics of conversation and reference. Such was her estimate of the importance of religion and the value of souls, that she considered it to be her duty to embrace every fitting opportunity of dropping a word for Christ. While she would not imprudently force the subject of religion on the attention of those with whom she might come in contact, she would watch for proper opportunities, and did not often allow them to pass away unimproved. How much good has been lost ; and may we not ask, how many precious souls have been lost for ever, through Christians not attending to the duty of

"sowing beside all waters," and embracing every opportunity of scattering "the good seed of the kingdom." The great and good Dr. Chalmers once unexpectedly met an old school-fellow at the house of a friend where he was remaining for the night; they spent the evening conversing on interesting topics concerning days of yore. At a late hour they retired to rest. Before the dawn of the morning his friend was dead. The Dr. ever regretted that their conversation was not of a more spiritual character. What a solemn lesson should this teach us?

Her attachment to the ordinances of religion and the social means of grace was strong, and manifested by her punctual and regular attendance, when the state of her health permitted, for a period of forty years. She had a delicate constitution, and the meeting house for many years was a considerable distance from her residence, yet the little band of worshippers with their Pastor, generally calculated upon her presence. That holy and venerable man, with his "little flock," are now all gone to the land of rest. They have met in the mansions above, never more to part.

In her latter days, when she was no longer able to travel far, a kind Providence caused a little church to be built but a few yards from her own door, in which she worshipped till the close of her life; for this she often devoutly praised God. Relying firmly on the divine promises and moral government of God, she was completely resigned to his will. Often, indeed, was she severely tempted to distrust God, but she ever found his promises adequate to her support; many were her trials and conflicts with the "Father of lies;" often would she be well nigh overwhelmed in the deep waters of trouble, but with the shield of faith and the sword of the spirit, she was enabled to triumph, and often found that the trial of her faith "was more precious than gold which perisheth." She regarded submission

to God as an important Christian duty, and however crooked and thorny her path might be, she would often say,

“My Father’s hand prepares the cup,
And what he wills is best.”

“I could write down twenty cases,” says Cecil, “wherein I wished God had done otherwise than he did, but which, I now see, had I had my own will, would have led to extensive mischief. Quietness and submission to God is one of the most difficult of all Christian duties, to sit where he places us, to be what he would have us to be, and this as long as he pleases.”

Her house was a *house of prayer*, and as such it was ever regarded. She herself conducted family worship. These were to her always refreshing seasons; she enjoyed them much. She had one spot by “the old arm chair,” where she always knelt, and

“I love it, I love it, and who shall dare
To chide me for loving that old Arm Chair?
In childhood’s hour I lingered near
That hallowed spot with listening ear;
She taught me to lisp my earliest prayer,
As I knelt beside that old arm chair.”

This is literally true. That spot was rendered sacred by many tears and prayers and blessings. From that place often has the prayer of faith ascended to the “Throne,” and a gracious answer immediately returned. She ever regarded family worship as a Christian duty of unspeakable importance, and one which could not be neglected without great spiritual loss, hence nothing was allowed to interfere with its due performance. To her it was a privilege; an enjoyment. She had taken up Joshua’s resolution, and had a church in her house. Often did she repeat that beautiful hymn:

“ I and my house will serve the Lord ;
 But first obedient to his word
 I must myself appear :
 By actions, words and temper show
 That I my heavenly master know,
 And serve with heart sincere.

I must the fair example set ;
 From those that on my pleasure wait
 The stumbling-block remove ;
 Their duty by my life explain,
 And still in all my works maintain
 The dignity of love.”

Our home influence is not a passing, but an abiding one, and all-powerful for good or evil, for peace or strife, for happiness or misery. Who can tell the extent of a mother's influence ? She is every day moulding the character of her children, and they in their turn will influence others, and so on, to the end of time. How important then, that mothers should be pious at home, for it is there where real character is seen.

A lighted lamp, says McCheyne, is a very small thing, and it burns calmly and without noise, yet it giveth light to all that are in the house, and so there is a quiet influence, which, like the flame of a scented lamp, fills many a home with light and fragrance. This influence falls as the refreshing dew, the invigorating sunbeam, the fertilizing shower, shining on all with the mild lustre of moonlight ; and it is refreshing for the writer to know that the subject of this memorial and her family influenced for good many individuals and families in the village where they resided. She is dead, but though dead yet she speaks. She lived to see the fruit of her labor, in her own family and neighbourhood. She first taught our infant lips to lip the following beautiful prayer :—

“ Be it my only wisdom here
 To serve the Lord with filial fear
 With loving gratitude,
 Superior sense may I display,
 By shunning every evil way,
 And walking in the good.

“O may I still from sin depart—
 A wise and understanding heart,
 Jesus, to me be given.
 And let me through thy spirit know
 To glorify my God below,
 And find my way to heaven.”

I have always regarded it as a good and wise thing on the part of my mother, that she taught her children these two verses as a prayer. They are most suitable and excellent. The words have always lingered in my memory both as a song and a prayer, and they contain my creed to-day, I want no other.

The two following passages of scripture she loved to quote, and all through life she realized their truth in her own experience :—“In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths ;” “Trust in the Lord and do good, and thou shalt dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.”

“Mothers be faithful. Don't be discouraged. Pray with and for your children. They never will, they never can forget them. They may appear not to heed your prayers ; they may put on an appearance of thoughtlessness and levity, as though your prayers were disregarded ; but persevere ; they never will be forgotten, but may be called up again in years to come, when you are gone to the grave, and like seed cast in the earth, germinate and produce fruit that shall flourish in immortality.” Mothers pray on ; the promise is to you and to your children. Pray often, pray earnestly, pray for faith, pray importunately, pray unceasingly for the salvation of your children. Begin early, sow beside all waters, the seed will take root, spring up, and bring forth fruit to the glory and honor of God. It will be as bread cast upon the waters, seen after many days. “He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” It is said of the now sainted mother of the Beechers, that she rose early to pray for her children, and especially that her sons might be ministers and missionaries of Jesus Christ.

Those prayers have been answered. Her *five* sons all became ministers and missionaries of Jesus Christ. She had power with God and prevailed, and if she prevailed, why may not you?

"I had a pious mother once," says a late minister, "who dropped things in my way : I could never rid myself of them. I was a professed infidel, but then I liked to be an infidel in company, rather than when alone. I was wretched when by myself. These principles and maxims spoiled my jollity. With my companions I could sometimes stifle them : like embers we kept each other warm. Besides, I was here a sort of hero. I had beguiled several of my associates into my opinions, and had to maintain a character before them. But I could not divest myself of my better principles." The writer ever felt more indebted to his mother than to any other human being for whatever he has attained or enjoyed. The remembrance of her pious instructions, her holy example, and her earnest prayers, still incite him to diligence in the path of duty.

"And if I e'er in heaven appear,
A mother's holy prayer,
A mother's hand and gentle tear,
That pointed to a Saviour dear,
Have led the wanderer there."

She was indeed a Christian mother, "training her children in the way they should go." She was affectionate, but not over indulgent. She always required the most prompt attention to her commands ; her injunctions were never allowed to be trifled with, not for a moment ; and as her children were early taught to understand this, corporeal punishment was very rarely required, hence her home was the abode of quietness, peace and order.

In nothing was her affectionate regard for her offspring more manifested than in the frequency and importunity of her prayers in their behalf. Nothing on earth did she desire so much as their early conversion to God. For this she labored, wept and

prayed, both in public and in private, by night and by day. Often has she been heard in early morn, at "The Throne of Grace," "groaning in the spirit," and "travailing in birth" for their salvation. On these occasions, the writer, then her careless boy, felt as did the Scottish Queen, when she said she was more afraid of John Knox's prayers than of an army of soldiers ; often has he trembled under his mother's prayers, and anxiously wished for the *concluding amen*. O those prayers ! those *never-to-be-forgotten* prayers ! they ultimately prevailed, and he yielded to the claims of his mother's God.

She had a peculiar gift in prayer, and although modest and of retiring habits, she often took the lead in social and public prayer meetings, and the result of her pleadings with God on these occasions was often both felt and seen. She also often retired for secret prayer, sometimes taking one of her "little ones" with her, and her Father which seeth in secret did not fail to reward her openly.

She was no believer in that morbid sentimentalism which is too often designated religion, but she was, nevertheless, a strenuous advocate for the religion of the *heart*. She would not only have an intelligent but a *devotional* piety ; she knew that religion was something to be enjoyed—a solid reality ; she did not trust in frames and feelings, but in God, in the atonement of Christ ; yet she knew that there was an enjoyment, a happiness to be derived from the possession of true religion, which could be found nowhere else. This she did not fail to press upon the attention of professors.

She seemed to have an abiding sense of the favor and presence of God, hence her habitual seriousness. She regarded herself as a spirit flying swiftly through time, onward to eternity ; often referring to the shortness of time, the brevity and uncertainty of life, the value and importance of religion in the prospect of death and a future state of unchangeable real-

ities. She went down to the grave by a gradual decline, being full of years and ripe for heaven, having "served her generation by the will of God," and

"Lovely in death, her beauteous image lay."

With the composure and fortitude of the Christian heroine, she bade the writer farewell, and charged him to *meet her in heaven*.

"O may I triumph so,
When all my warfare's past,
And dying, find my latest foe
Under my feet at last."

Her "Remains" were interred in the graveyard of the Village Church, at Great Budworth, Cheshire, in "sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection."

Julius Cæsar died adjusting his robes that he might fall gracefully. The infidel Hume died with pitiful jokes upon his lips; Voltaire with horrid imprecations, mingled with despairing supplications to Him whom he had boastfully declared he would *crush*; Rousseau presumptuously boasting of his being able to "die game;" Paine uttering the most piercing shrieks of sorrow and remorse. The writer of this memorial knew a case of a boastful sceptic who was taken suddenly ill, and when he saw that death was near at hand, was terribly alarmed; he declared this to his nurse, and was anxious to be instructed in the way of salvation, but his *friends*, being afraid of an exposure, stood constantly in the doorway of his room and wickedly refused to allow the minister to enter. They boasted that he "died game!" He knew another case in the same neighbourhood, of a sceptical lawyer, whose shrieks when dying were so terrible that his friends were obliged to leave his room. Is this all the support and comfort that scepticism can afford its adherents in their last moments?

Religion, says Webster, is the tie that connects man to his Creator, and holds him to his throne. If that tie is sundered or broken, he floats away a worthless atom in the universe, its proper attractions all gone, its destiny thwarted, and its whole future nothing but darkness, desolation and death.

Our Cottage home, where for nearly half a century she had lived a blameless and godly life, was a beautiful spot. The front was covered with the large leaved Ivy, Honeysuckles and Roses, which were so intertwined as to cause them to have the appearance of growing from one root. At the gable end stood a large Rosidendrum tree, which in summer time, being covered with rich purple flowers, was "a perfect show," so that few passers-by went on, without pausing to admire it. The garden walks were lined on each side with borders of Polyanthus, Primroses, Daisies, and other kinds of pretty English flowers, and in the hedge rows were trees "bearing fruit after their kind." At the front stood a sturdy, wide, spreading oak, which protected the house from the chilling east winds. The thrush and red-breast annually sung their sweet and grateful songs, and built their nests in the trees and hedge copse of the garden, for a long period. They were regarded as household pets and in winter were always fed with the crumbs of the table. To me the spot was "a thing of beauty:" it will linger in my memory for ever. I have often stood on a calm Sabbath morning, in that garden, and heard floating in the air, the music of the bells from two or three parish Churches, each being situated several miles away, from each other and from me. The effect of that Church-bell music floating overhead, combined with the song of the the rising lark, the thrush and the red-breast was charming.

" The happy homes of England,
How softly in their bowers
Is laid the holy quietness,
That breathes from Sabbath hours.

Solemn, yet sweet, the Church bells, chime
 Floats through the woods at morn,
 All other sounds in that *still* time,
 Of breeze and leaf are born."

But now, after an absence of many years, I found all sadly changed,—

"Where once we dwelt, our name is heard no more,
 There stands my home, no more my home, and they
 Who loved me so,—they too have passed away."

The smoke of mammon had almost destroyed the trees and flowers, and the household vines were no more, only the bare walls were seen, where once the Ivy and the Roses grew. Almost by stealth we passed through the old garden gate, and slowly round the flowerless walks. We plucked a small branch of the ivy from a wall and brought it with us over the sea, as a souvenir, and a frail memorial of the days that are gone. By permission we crossed the door-step and entered the house; strange thoughts and feelings of a sombre and pensive nature rushed upon us. Here I first saw the light, here I was nursed and trained and brought up, and from this spot I went forth to battle with the world. Here our mother wept and prayed that the Lord would be the guide of our youth. But how changed!—

"There was now no face of gladness,
 Or voice of welcome there, for me."

But although changed, it was still the old home, and its early associations and pleasures were yet ineffaced from the tablet of memory, and for the moment, I was carried away back to the days of childhood and youth. The face, movements and counsels of mother, were being again heard and seen, and her lessons once more impressed upon my heart. But the whole aspect of my old home was so changed,—the old-fashioned furniture, the pictures and the old arm chair were gone,—that

I felt no pleasure in remaining, after I had taken a glance around, for—

“Now the scenes of my childhood, and dear to my heart,
All pensive, I visit, and sigh to depart,
Their flowers have languished, their beauty has ceased,
For strangers inhabit that homestead of peace.”

So we turned away, and bade perhaps a final adieu, to the spot once so sacred and dear to us.

But our beloved mother is “gone up higher,” to a fairer clime, and to a purer, sinless, painless home, where “there is a fullness of joy, and pleasures for ever more.”

“Sweet spirit! where thou art gone,
Adieus and farewells are unknown.
It would be endless joy to me,
Were I again thy face to see.”

I will here repeat, that, if I have accomplished anything by way of advancing the cause of Christ; if I have endeavored to ease the burdens and alleviate the sorrows of the poor, the widow and the fatherless, and to help “the stranger within our gates;” if I know anything of Christ and His religion, by personal experience; I owe it chiefly to my mother, who, being dead, has yet ever been speaking to me. There has scarcely been a moment in my life, in which her loving and gentle spirit has not been with me, admonishing me to avoid evil and to cleave to that which is good. And so the good influence of every godly mother will go on through the ages, until the consummation of all things, when

“The Judge shall come with might,
To terminate the evil,
To diadem the right,”

and “God shall be all in all.”

THE MORAL.

The social and moral condition of any community depends much upon the character of its homes, and they depend much

upon the character of the mothers. The children of to-day will be the men and women of the future, and they are, and will be, much what the mother is at home. Like the clay in the hands of the potter, she may make and mould them, according to her will. But she does this, unconsciously it may be, without putting her will in it at all. From earliest infancy, her influence and example, are very potent, either for good or evil, in forming the character of her children. Probably the great majority of mothers do not consider this, and are satisfied if they can feed and clothe and keep them in health. These, of course, are good things, but every mother of children, should feel that the building of them up in good morals, and in the principles of true religion, is a matter of the highest importance. In order to do this, she herself should so think and speak and live, in the midst of the family, that she may safely say, "Whatsoever things ye have heard and seen in me, do." The home is her Church and school, and probably there is no position in this human life of ours, more important and more fraught with serious consequences. In great measure, her daily work and conduct in her home, and before her children, will form their character in this life and decide their destiny in the life to come.

If this be the case,—and who will doubt it?—then it becomes a matter of supreme importance, that mothers should be both wise and good, that they may be enabled to "Train up their children in the way they should go."

Mothers! As with the pen of a diamond and in letters of light, I would press these matters upon your most serious attention. For the love of God and your children, give earnest heed to them now, while you may, and while your children are young and at home.